

More than Santa Claus, your sister knows when you've been bad and good

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Satsuki has two sisters, one naughty, one nice, or, a contrast piece between Nui and Ryuko.

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This is a weird combo between my usual ramblings about the effed-uppedness of the Kiryuin family and Ryuko-Satsuki-Christmas-Sister-Fluff.

Enjoy!

Seven years ago:

"Kiki. Kiki, wake up." Satsuki sighed and rolled over. She hated that nickname. "I had a nightmare." Still she didn't move. She wasn't going to pretend that she trusted her, that they could just snuggle up like baby penguins and go to sleep.

This is just another one of her games.

"Nee-san!" Nui whined, flopping across Satsuki over the covers. "Move over!" Ten-year-old Nui sat up and easily shoved her sister to the side of the bed, despite their size differences. Like a cat, she squiggled head-first under the blankets, making a quick u-turn so that her head poked up onto the pillow, loose gold hair a mess of egregious bed-head. Nui made short work of cuddling up to Satsuki, arms wrapping loosely around her sister's neck and cold feet pressing deliberately against warm calves. Satsuki hissed her disapproval.

"You're cold." Satsuki knew how to phrase her objection, how to keep the peace. A declaration, not a command. At home, on her turf, Nui thought herself the queen, and she was fully capable of making her sister suffer for trying to stop her from doing whatever she wanted.

"Oh, you don't like that?" Nui moved a foot up to press against the inside of Satsuki's much warmer thigh. "How's that?" Satsuki made a deep sound in her chest as she exhaled, sounding very much like a nest of huge angry bees. Her usual charisma was lost, however, in the soft setting of the dark bedroom, and Nui only giggled and nuzzled her face into her sister's neck, moving an arm down to squeeze Satsuki around the ribs.

I do what I want and no one can stop me. Satsuki gritted her teeth, thinking of Nui's oft-repeated mantra. If there was one word that could describe her younger sister, it was *spoiled*.

It's easy enough to be spoiled. It's one thing to be a favorite child, it's quite another to have the strength of a wounded bear since infancy. Satsuki remembered sitting on the floor when she was younger, playing quietly with some blocks. Nui decided she wanted them, and when Satsuki put up a fight, Nui did what any angry two-year-old would do - she hit her sister.

Satsuki went to the hospital with a concussion.

For several years, Satsuki looked upon her younger sister as an annoyance and a plague to be avoided. Their mother fawned over Nui, kissing and dressing her (much to Nui's delight) as she cooed her perverted philosophies into the girl's ears. It was all Satsuki could do to keep from sneering, but she didn't exactly hate Nui.

It wasn't until years later that Satsuki came to realize that there was definitely something wrong with her sister.

Soroi had given Satsuki a puppy for her ninth birthday.

"In my opinion, Madam," Soroi had said to her mother, carefully holding the blue and white ball of squirming fur against his cummerbund, "There's no better way to teach a child about power dynamics than to have them train their own dog." Ragyo had given the butler a hard stare but ultimately allowed the animal, under the

condition that Satsuki have it perfectly trained by the time it was one year old.

Despite his assertions about power, when Soroi handed the puppy to Satsuki he said,

"Love her with all your strength."

And she did. For a while, the two were inseparable. Satsuki named her Maiya, after what she imagined her dead sister might have been named. The little dog was amicable and willing to learn, and was one of the few things that could make Satsuki smile. Often after a long night, Soroi would go into the girl's room with a cup of tea and find her curled up in her chair, her arms wound tightly around the little Australian shepherd as the dog regally accepted her embrace.

Satsuki started having fantasies about how she would train Maiya to help in her eventual rebellion.

She remembered with great clarity going into her room one night, her dog on her heels, and finding Nui and Kuroido sitting on her bed. Soroi had the evening off, and so Kuroido took it upon himself to tell both the girls a bedtime story.

"Do you know what a sniper is?" He began, fat lips pulling over narrow teeth. Nui shook her head. "In war, a sniper is fear. Fear is what wins wars." Satsuki turned her head away, but Nui sat forward, chin in hands. "I knew a man, a sniper, hidden over an enemy town. Someone dared to venture out, to try for a run, so he shot him in the leg." Kuroido grinned and made as if holding a rifle in his arms. "His family runs out to help him. The pig is lying on the ground, screaming and bleeding and yelling for help. You know what the sniper did?" Nui shook her head, eyes wide and enraptured. "Huh. He shot down everyone who tried to help the first man. Every one, right in the head. So the whole town had to listen to that man crying as he bled out. As he died, one stupid bloke ran out with a white flag, and the sniper shot *him* in the leg and killed the first man. All night he made sure there was someone bleeding in the street. The next day, the

whole city surrendered." Kuroido chuckled and sat back. " *That's* what power is. Fear is power."

Nui breathed a sigh of awe, an odd look coming over her face. Slowly, she drifted to her bedroom across the hall. Satsuki shuddered and crawled into bed, feeling sick to her stomach.

The next day, Satsuki awoke to the sound of Maiya crying. Frantic, she leapt out of bed and followed the sound into Nui's room. Her dog was lying helplessly squirming on the pink rug, both of her front legs broken as she whimpered and whined. Satsuki started screaming, tears erupting from her eyes as she ran to take her dog into her arms. She stopped suddenly as something whizzed past her face.

She looked up to find Nui crouched on the top of her bed's canopy, a wild look in her eyes as she fingered another kitchen knife.

"You'd better not touch that dog, Kiki." Nui said slowly, her eyes bouncing as she grinned.

Satsuki said nothing, but set her teeth and marched to the suffering animal, intent on picking her up. The metal of the knife hummed as it was thrown through the air. The tip of the blade skewered Satsuki's hand, and was thrown with such force that it dragged her back and pinned her to a wall. Satsuki cried out with anger and shock and pain, feeling sick as her blood splattered the wall behind her.

Maiya had to be put down.

Nui grew worse after that, always amusing herself with new "games" that involved more and more cruelty. Their mother thought it was adorable, and Nui basked in the attention she received.

Satsuki hated her.

Still, she was interested in this new vulnerability Nui was showing as she snuggled up to her in bed. She wasn't pinching or tickling, she just lay there with her face in the crook of Satsuki's shoulder.

"I had a dream," Nui began, her voice muffled and surprisingly sincere. "I dreamed that Mama went to visit you at school, and you stabbed her and cut off her head." Satsuki blinked but said nothing, a twisting feeling of trepidation rising in her throat. Nui lifted her head to look at her sister, huge purple eyes shining. "You would never do that, would you, Kiki?"

"No." Satsuki lied. There was a long silence, and Nui appeared to have gone to sleep.

"I love Mama." She suddenly said sleepily. "I wish she loved me back."

"What do you mean?"

"I think she loves you more." Nui's grip around Satsuki's waist suddenly tightened, and the older girl couldn't help but groan in unison with the groaning of her ribs. "She said, 'why can't you be more like your sister?' She... she *wants* you."

"Nui," Satsuki said suddenly, a lump rising in her throat. "When does she say these things?"

"When she... uh... touches me, I guess."

"Oh, God..." *When did that start?* Satsuki fought back sudden tears. Though her ability to feel empathy for her sister was stunted by the rocky nature of their relationship, she couldn't wish that suffering on anyone. "I... I'm sorry." The words came out in barely a whisper as Satsuki forced them through her teeth.

"Do you like it? When Mama touches you?"

"No." This time, Satsuki told the truth.

"I like it. Feels nice."

It was at that point that Satsuki finally realized that there was no hope for her sister. Her body stiffened as she felt Nui's hand tug at

the hem of her shirt. "I think..." Nui whispered into Satsuki's neck, her lips moving over the skin of her collar. "I think I wanna be like Mama. She always knows what to do... besides..." Slowly, Nui moved her hand up her sister's side. "I think I want you, too." Satsuki sat up suddenly as she felt Nui's fingers brush against the underside of her breast.

"Don't touch me, Nui!" She roared, her eyes flashing and burning as she twisted out of bed and snatched bakuzan from its place over the headboard. Nui's eyes narrowed. All the sleepy tranquility was gone from the room, replaced with electric hostility.

"I do what I want, Kiki."

Present day.

"Satsuki, Satsuki, can I come in?" Ryuko stood sheepishly by the door, clutching at the hem of the oversized T-shirt she used as pajamas. Satsuki lifted her head so that her sister could see her nod, too tired to speak. As Ryuko approached, Satsuki shifted over and patted the bed where she had just left, inviting her sister in. Ryuko looked unsure, still wreaking havoc on the edge of her poor shirt.

"You sure, Nee-san?" Satsuki nodded again.

"Yes," She managed to croak out through her tired mouth. "I'm sure." Sighing, Ryuko dove head-first under the blankets and stayed there for a full minute, feet pushed haphazardly under the pillows.

"Hm adddhh nrrghhmm." Ryuko finally said, muffled.

"I can't hear you down there." The younger girl squirmed around and inched like an inchworm back up to the surface, her red flip of hair peeking out from under the covers. Tentatively, she reached for her sister.

"Can I, uh... hold you?" If there was any light in the room, Satsuki would have seen that Ryuko's face was the color of a fire engine. "No big deal, I just, uh, I had a, uh, a nightmare. But whatevs, it's okay, I mean, I'm tough and-" Satsuki stopped her by turning and somewhat awkwardly putting her arms around her. Relieved, Ryuko sighed and buried her face into her older sister's neck as she pushed her cold toes against Satsuki's calves.

"You're cold."

"Sorry." Ryuko removed her feet and curled them under herself. "How's that?"

"Better." There was silence again. Satsuki considered the familiar but utterly foreign situation. Here she was, snuggling with her sister, but she felt totally at ease. There was no tension, no whizzing calculation, no rising hatred and disgust. She felt safe.

"I had a nightmare." Ryuko started quietly, her voice muffled in Satsuki's hair. "About, when... with Junketsu and Ra- uh, my, our mother." Satsuki felt a shudder run through Ryuko and she clutched her tighter, not saying anything.

"I don't care that it happened. I mean, I do, but, it's not the worst part." Satsuki felt tears beginning to drip down her collar and her own eyes stung. "The worst part is that, when it was happening, I *liked* it! I was just screaming and screaming on the inside but it just felt so *good* !" Ryuko started to sob. "What kind of monster enjoys that? What kind of monster am I?"

"Our bodies betray us sometimes." Satsuki whispered softly, stroking her sister's hair as tears leaked from her expressionless face. "That's what makes us human. Did *you* like it when that happened?" Ryuko looked up at her suddenly, confused.

"I just said I-"

"I didn't ask whether you felt pleasure. I asked if you, Matoi Ryuko, the strong, good, *human* soul that I know liked being manipulated by her mother."

"No! No, I didn't! Of course I didn't!" Satsuki hummed and gently pressed Ryuko's head back into her shoulder.

"That's good enough for me." There was another quiet period as Ryuko's sniffles died down and she began to relax.

"I wish I could be more like you." Ryuko sighed, rubbing her nose on Satsuki's shoulder.

"Don't."

"I love you, Nee-san."

"I love you, too." Satsuki began to drift off, perfectly content, her arms around her sister slackening, when Ryuko suddenly chirped up again.

"Hey, Sats. It's technically Christmas!" Satsuki groaned and let go of Ryuko to roll over.

"Only technically."

"Come on, I wanna give you your present now!"

"Ahhh... fine." Ryuko got up and dashed out of the room. When she came back, she poked her head through the door, keeping the rest of her body hidden.

"Close your eyes and hold out your hands."

"It's not going to be a worm is it? No, now I'm sure. It's a worm." But Satsuki did what she was told, keeping her eyes closed as Ryuko crept back into the room and jumped onto the bed with her older sister's present.

It was a puppy.